

21 September 2026

P3604 Technical Committee & National Manager

Standards New Zealand
Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment
15 Stout Street
Wellington 6011

DZ NZS 3604 Timber-framed buildings – NZSEE’s Public Consultation Submission

Dear Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present a submission from the New Zealand Society for Earthquake Engineering (NZSEE) on the update to NZS3604 Timber-framed buildings (non-engineered), currently under review and for public comment. Light timber framed low rise construction represents close to 90% of the New Zealand’s Building Consents and NZS3604 is used by architects, building consent officers, builders, engineers, etc.

This standard is one of the cornerstones of seismic resilience for Aotearoa New Zealand, and it is usually used as engineers and non-engineers as the gauge for specific design (SD). NZS3604 interpretation, scope and limitations must be clearly stated and exemplified to avoid abuse by designers. Some of these issues have been highlighted recently by NZSEE¹ and the Natural Hazards Commission (NHC). More importantly, recent presentation and survey with our members have highlighted the need for clearer and simple standards² and the need for clearer guidance in standards (SD and non-SD).

This submission is part of a broader submission with SESOC (Structural Engineering Society New Zealand, NZGS (New Zealand Geotechnical Society), Engineering New Zealand (and their Engineering General Practitioners group) and the Timber Design Society (TDS). In general, NZSEE supports these groups' submissions with some minor differences, but NZSEE is particularly interested items that are pertinent to the Society’s mission. Thus, New Zealand Society for Earthquake Engineering presents the following feedback to the P3604 committee for its consideration.

Nga Mihi Nui,

Yours sincerely,

Julian Benito

¹ [Interim Advice: Townhouse Bracing – NZSEE](#)

² [NZSEE Webinar – Why is Seismic Design in New Zealand so hard? | Online – NZSEE](#)

President | Tumuaki**New Zealand Society for Earthquake Engineering**

Our Society is a broad-based technical society of over 1000 members bringing together all professionals engaged in the effects of earthquakes including structural | geotechnical | building services | central government | local authority | infrastructure engineers, researchers | academics, seismologists, social scientists, insurers among others. We have an interest across the full spectrum of the built environment and people, including buildings and infrastructure, and society.

Our interest transcends life safety to consider the earthquake resilience of buildings, infrastructure and society.

Our Society was formed in 1973, and our current objectives include:

- Fostering the advancement of the science and practice of earthquake engineering and allied fields.
- Facilitating research and support initiatives to address seismic risk and enhance the resilience of the built environment and communities to earthquakes.
- Retaining a close liaison with Engineering New Zealand by being a Collaborating Technical Society of the Institution and
- Furthering the objectives of the International Association for Earthquake Engineering as applicable to New Zealand through international cooperation in earthquake engineering.
- Pecuniary gain is not a purpose of our Society.

Our Society has advocated for the proactive management of the risk associated existing buildings from earthquakes from its inception. We actively have looked at the effects of earthquakes both in New Zealand and overseas through our Learning from Earthquakes programme, shared the learnings to the New Zealand government and the professionals engaged in the built environment and developed or promoted initiatives from these learnings to work towards enhancing the earthquake resilience of New Zealand.